

Life Lesson 92
Athaliah and Joash
Text: II Kings 11, II Chronicles 22

Introduction

All her brothers lay dead in the palace -- murdered. All of her nephews lay dead, too. Jehosheba must have felt sick and horrified at the sight, especially since she knew the murderer. Her own mother had killed them.

But then, from the pile of bodies, she heard a whimpering cry. Someone was still alive! If she tried to save him, Jehosheba knew it would mean risking her own life. Her mother killed the rest of the family. It wouldn't bother her to kill Jehosheba, too. What should she do?

The Story

You remember good King Jehoshaphat of Judah. He loved God and served his country well. His son, Jehoram, wasn't like his dad, though. He did lots of bad things, but the worst thing he did was marry the daughter of wicked Ahab and Jezebel. Athaliah was like her mother, only worse!

When Jehoram died, his son Ahaziah became king. He was as bad as his dad. He married into Ahab's family, too. Jehu killed him while he was visiting King Jehoram of Israel.

So, Athaliah's son was dead. Do you think she was sad and cried about losing her son?

No, I hate to even tell you what she did next. She decided SHE wanted to rule Judah, so she had all the men in the royal family killed so she could rule the country. That meant she murdered all of her sons and her grandsons! It's hard to imagine anyone that wicked.

We know that many women today want to be the ruler of their own lives instead of having God as their king. That's what sin is -- insisting on being the boss, our own little god.

They think having a baby would interfere with the way they want to rule their lives, so they have an abortion, killing their little baby before it is born. They don't realize it, but they are being almost as bad as wicked Athaliah who killed her children and grandchildren to get her own way.

Athaliah thought everyone who had a claim to throne of Judah was dead. But Jehosheba heard that whimpering cry. She looked among the bodies and found baby Joash, the son of her brother Ahaziah, the dead king. She might die, too, but she decided to take the risk. First she hid baby Joash in a bedroom. Then she sneaked him out of the palace and took him to the temple.

Jehosheba's husband, Jehoida, loved God and served Him as a priest. They knew that Athaliah would kill them and their children if she found out what they had done. They decided to do the right thing and save the rightful king of Judah. Joash lived in hiding in the temple for six years. When he was seven, the time came for Jehoida's plan to take place.

"We have to be organized so that nothing will happen to little Joash," Jehoida told the other loyal priests. "One third of you must stand watch at the door of the temple. Another group will watch the gate, and a third group will surround Joash. Don't let anyone get close enough to hurt him."

According to plan, with the loyal priests carefully guarding the boy, Jehoida brought him before the people.

"Behold, the King of Judah," Jehoida proclaimed as he anointed Joash with oil and placed the crown on his head.

The people shouted with joy because God had spared a boy to be the king. They had been so sad that none of great King David's descendants were alive to take the throne. And I imagine they were certainly tired of wicked Athaliah!

The people cheered and cried, "God save the king!"

Athaliah heard the noise from over in the palace. She went to the temple to see what was going on. Was she ever mad when she saw everyone shouting and clapping because of the newly crowned king!

"Treason! Treason!" she screamed.

"Don't kill her here," Jehoida ordered. "She shouldn't be killed in God's house. Follow her and do away with her when she leaves."

They did, and the most wicked grandmother in the Bible met her judgement.

She thought she had the world under her control, but she found that she couldn't defeat God. God said that He would save a descendent of David to be king. He made sure that one of the royal family was spared. God always keeps His promises.

The Life Lesson

Jezebel was wicked and her daughter Athaliah was mean and heartless. Did that mean that Jehosheba had to be wicked and mean? No, our parents don't make us wicked. We each have a choice about our lives. We can choose to serve God and to live to please Him. We can choose to rebel and be wicked. We don't have to do wrong because of our parents, and we can't blame them for our bad choices. Jehosheba chose the right way. She didn't follow her mother and grandmother. Her mother and grandmother suffered the punishment for their wicked deeds, but Jehosheba was blessed.

You will be blessed, too, if you choose to do right and follow God.

Review Questions

1. Who was the most wicked grandmother in the Bible?
A. *Athaliah*
2. What bad thing did Athaliah do?
A. *She murdered her sons and grandsons so she could rule Judah.*
3. Who was Athaliah's mother?
A. *Jezebel*
4. What baby was rescued?
A. *Joash*
5. Who rescued him?
A. *His aunt, Jehosheba*
6. Where did Joash live for six years?
A. *In the temple.*
7. Who helped Jehosheba hide Joash and then proclaimed him king?
A. *Her husband, Jehoida.*
8. What job did Jehoida have?
A. *He was a priest*
9. What did Athaliah say when she saw Joash had been crowned king?
A. *Treason! Treason!*
10. Can we blame our parents for the choices we make?
A. *No, we are responsible for our own choices.*